

# Armenia in the Sphere of Roman-Parthian Conflict (Second to Beginning of the Third Century)

## [Notes]

by Nicholas Adontz

These previously unpublished notes by Nicholas Adontz were written during 1940-1941 in Brussels. Translated from French into Armenian and edited, with additional notes, by S. S. Xach'atryan, in *Works of Nicholas Adontz in Five Volumes* [in Armenian], Volume 4 (Erevan, 2009), P. H. Hovhannisyan, editor, pp. 523-534, and the editor's notes on pp. 614-615. The editor also provided the untitled work with a title based on its contents. The Armenian text is available [here](#). These are notes for a future study, rather than a finished article. In this work, Adontz has produced a list of Greek and Latin primary sources for the period and topic under discussion, arranged chronologically, and with minimal comments. The present English translation was made by Robert Bedrosian from the Armenian text. Published on the Internet, 2022. Attached to the pdf document is a multilingual HTML version, and links to additional resources.

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[Footnotes](#) by S. S. Xach'atryan.

Xach'atryan's footnotes appear in the text as [(n)], and are located at the end of the article.

Adontz' own footnotes (n) appear at the bottom of each page.

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**Antoninus Pius (138-161 A.D.)**

[Cassius Dio, 69](#) [in English, at LacusCurtius. See next link for the quotation.

[Cassius Dio, 70](#) [LXIX, 15, 3] epitome of Antoninus [in English, at LacusCurtius]:

"When Pharasmanes the Iberian came to Rome with his wife, Antoninus increased his domain, allowed him to offer sacrifice on the Capitol, set up an equestrian statue in the temple of Bellona (Ἐνυώ) [(1)], and viewed an exercise in arms in which this chieftain, his son, and the other prominent Iberians took part."

**Marcus Aurelius (161-180 A.D.)**

[Cassius Dio, 71](#) [in English, at LacusCurtius].

**161 A.D.** Marcus Antoninus Aurelius chose as his co-ruler Lucius Verus, married him to his daughter Lucilla, and sent him to conduct the war against the Parthians.

**162 A.D.**

"Vologaesius [(2)], it seems, had begun the war by hemming in on all sides the Roman legion under Severianus that was stationed at Elegeia [(3)], a place in Armenia, and then shooting down and destroying the

whole force, leaders and all; and he was now advancing, powerful and formidable, against the cities of Syria. Lucius (1), accordingly, went to Antioch and collected a large body of troops; then, keeping the best of the leaders under his personal command (2), he took up his own headquarters in the city, where he made all the dispositions and assembled the supplies for the war, while he entrusted the armies to Cassius.

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(1) According to Julius Capitolinus, in *Marcus Antoninus* 8 and 20, *Verus* 4, Lucius probably spent the winter in Laodicea [in the Roman province of Asia], and the summer in Antioch and Dapne, engaged in various revels and enjoyments, while Antoninus was in Rome undertaking a variety of useful actions for the war. See also the *Suda* entry for Βήρος.

(2) Julius Capitolinus, *Verus*, 7. Duces autem confecerunt Parthicum bellum Statius Priscus, Avidius Cassius et Martius Verus per quadriennium ita ut Babylonem et Armeniam vindicarent [The military commanders Statius Priscus, Avidius Cassius, and Martius Verus carried on the Parthian war for four years, with the result that they conquered Babylon and Armenia].

[Historia Augusta](#) [in English, at LacusCurtius].

### **Wikipedia:**

[Antoninus Pius](#).

[Antoninus Pius](#), Google search of Wikipedia.

[Marcus Aurelius](#).

[Marcus Aurelius](#), Google search of Wikipedia.

[Lucius Verus](#).

[Lucius Verus](#), Google search of Wikipedia.

[Vologases IV](#).

[Roman-Parthian War](#), of 161-166 A.D.

[Roman-Parthian Wars](#), 54 B.C. - 217 A.D.

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**165 A.D.**

The latter made a noble stand against the attack of Vologases, and finally, when the king was deserted by his allies and began to retire, he pursued him as far as Seleucia and Ctesiphon, destroying Seleucia by fire and razing to the ground the palace of Vologases at Ctesiphon (1)."

[Dio Cassius, 71, 2-3](#) [bilingual Greek/English, at Internet Archive].

Cass. Dio, 71, 2-3.

Ὁ γὰρ Οὐολογαῖσος πολέμον ἤρξε, καὶ στρατόπεδόν τε ὄλον  
Ῥωμαϊκὸν τὸ ὑπὸ Σεβηριανῷ τεταγμένον ἐν τῇ Ἑλεγεῖα, χωρίῳ τινὶ  
τῆς Ἀρμενίας, περισχὼν παντόθεν αὐτοῖς ἡγεμόσι κατετόξευσε καὶ  
διέφθειρε, καὶ τῆς Συρίας ταῖς πόλεσι πολὺς ἐπῆει καὶ φοβερός. Ὁ οὖν  
Λούκιος ἐλθὼν ἐς Ἀντιόχειαν καὶ πλείστους στρατιώτας συλλέξας, καὶ  
τοὺς ἀρίστους τῶν ἡγεμόνων ὑφ' ἑαυτὸν ἔχων, αὐτὸς μὲν ἐν τῇ πόλει  
ἐκάθητο διατάττων ἕκαστα καὶ τὰς τοῦ πολέμου χορηγίας ἀθροίζων,  
Κασσίῳ δὲ τὰ στρατεύματα ἐπέτρεψε. καὶ ὃς ἐπιόντα τε τὸν  
Οὐολογαῖσον γενναίως ὑπέμεινε, καὶ τέλος ἐγκαταλειφθέντα ὑπὸ τῶν  
συνμαχῶν καὶ ὀπίσω ἀναχωρήσαντα ἐπεδίωξε, μέχρι τε Σελευκείας καὶ  
Κτησιφώντος ἤλασε, καὶ τὴν τε Σελευκείαν διέφθειρεν ἐμπρήσας, καὶ  
τὰ τοῦ Οὐολογαῖσου βασιλεία τὰ ἐν τῇ Κτησιφώντι κατέσκαψεν.

However, while returning he lost many soldiers due to hunger and disease. In any case, he returned with the remainder of his troops to Syria/Assyria. In the future, Lucius organized a plot against Marcus Aurelius, his father-in-law, but he died from poison (Joannes Xiphilinus).

## 164 A.D.

"Martius Verus sent Thucydides to take Sohaemus to Armenia [(4)]. That general, skillfully benefitting from all the terror

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(1) Julii Capitolini, Marcus Antoninus 8. Fuit eo tempore etiam Parthicum bellum, quod Vologaesius paratum sub Pio, Marci et Veri tempore indixit, fugato Attidio Corneliano, qui Syriam tunc administrabat. [At the same time, the Parthian war took place, which Vologaesius had been preparing from the days of Pius, but commenced under Marcus and Verus, putting to flight Attidius Cornelianus, the governor of Syria)]; *ibid.*, Verus, 6...when the legate was killed and the legions slaughtered, the [rulers of] Syria/Assyria were intending defection, and the looting of the East].

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[525] his weaponry produced, successfully executed his mission. As for Martius, not only was he skilled at subduing the enemy by weapons (a general's virtue), quickly getting in front of them or cleverly deceiving them, but he also had persuasive means of convincing people, using rich gifts and capturing their ambitions. There was a grace in everything he did and in everything he said that calmed everyone's irritation and anger and kindled hope. He also knew the moment to flatter, present gifts and invite to the table. Still, the zeal shown in his behavior, the enduring perseverance in the attacks against the enemies made the barbarians understand that his friendship was more beneficial to them than his hatred. And thus, arriving at New City [(5)], which was occupied by a Roman garrison established after Priscus (1), and by his words and actions pacifying the attempted riot, he made that city the main city of Armenia."

*Ὑμνημα (Suidae Lexicon), v. Μάρτιος*

Ὅτι Μάρτιος Βῆρος τὸν Θουκυδίδην ἐκπέμπει καταγαγεῖν Σύαιμον εἰς Ἀρμενίαν· ὃς δέει τῶν ὀπλῶν καὶ τῇ οἰκείᾳ περὶ πάντα τὰ προσπίπτοντα εὐβουλίᾳ τοῦ πρόσω εἶχετο ἐρρωμένως. ἦν δὲ ἱκανὸς ὁ Μάρτιος οὐ μόνον ὀπλοῖς βιάσασθαι τοὺς ἀντιπολέμους ἢ ὀξύτητι προλαβεῖν ἢ ἀπάτῃ κατασοφίσασθαι, ἥπερ ἐστὶ στρατηγῶν ἀλκή, ἀλλὰ καὶ λόγῳ πιθανῶς πείσαι καὶ δωρεαῖς μεγαλόφροσιν οἰκειώσασθαι καὶ ἐλπίδι ἀγαθῇ δελεάσαι. χάρις τε ἦν ἐπὶ πᾶσι τοῖς πρασσομένοις ὑπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ λεγομένοις, τὸ μὲν ἀγανακτοῦν ἐκάστου καὶ τὸ θυμούμενον παραμυθουμένη, τὸ δὲ ἐλπίζον ἐτι μᾶλλον αὖξουσα. κολακείας τε δώρων καὶ τῆς παρὰ τραπέζαις δεξιώσεως καιρὸν ἤδει. οἷς προσδὸν τὸ πρὸς τὰς πράξεις σύντονον καὶ τὸ πρὸς τοὺς ἐχθροὺς σὺν ὀξύτητι δραστήριον, αἰρετώτερον ἐδείκνυε τοῖς βαρβάροις εἶναι τῆς φιλίας αὐτοῦ μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς ἐχθρας ἀντιποιεῖσθαι. ἀφικόμενος οὖν ἐς τὴν Καινὴν πόλιν, ἣν φρουρὰ Ῥωμαίων κατεῖχεν ἐκ Πρίσκου καταστᾶσα, νωτερίζειν

(1) Julii Capitolini, Marcus Antoninus, 9. Gestae sunt res in Armeniae prospere per Statium Priscum, Artaxatis captis [The affairs of Armenia were successfully carried out by Statius Priscus, [in his day] Artaxata was captured].

**Wikipedia:**

[\[Publius\] Martius Verus.](#)

[Sohaemus of Armenia.](#)

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πειρωμένους λόγῳ τε καὶ ἔργῳ σωφρονίσας ἀπέφηνε πρώτην εἶναι τῆς  
' Ἀρμενίας.

Bakur [(6)], with his brother Mihrdat (Merithates), went to Rome and left us an inscription on his brother's grave ["...[I], Aurelius Pacorus, great king of Armenia, purchased a stone coffin for my dear brother, Aurelius Merithates, who lived with me for 56 years and two months"].

Θ.Κ. Αὐρήλιος Πάκορος βασιλεὺς μέγας τῆς Ἀρμενίας ἡγόρακα  
σαρκοφάγον Αὐρή(λίῳ) Μεριθά|τι ἀδελφῷ γλυκὺ|τάτῳ ζήσαντι| σὺν  
ἐμοὶ ἔτη νς' μή<νας> β'

*Corpus Inscriptionum Graecorum*, 6S59. Georg Kaibel no. 1472, 1890.

Th. Mommsen, *History of Rome*, Volume 5, Book 8, 164 A.D.

Marcus Aurelius entrusted the entire governance of [the Roman province of] Asia [in Asia Minor] to Cassius, while he waged war in person against barbarians at the Danube [Ister] [such as], the Iazyges and Marcomans.

**172/173 A.D.**

After expelling King Furtius, the Quadis designated Ariogaesus as their ruler.

καὶ τὸν βασιλέα σφῶν Φούρτιον ἐκβαλόντες Ἀριόγαισον αὐτοὶ ἐφ'  
ἐαυτῶν βασιλέα σφίσιν ἐστήσαντο.

Marcus Aurelius, aroused against Ariogaesus, publicly offered 1,000 gold pieces to whomever could bring Ariogaesus to him alive, and 500 pieces to whomever could show him Ariogaesus' severed head.

In other cases he behaved humanely, even toward his archenemies.

Instead of having the satrap Tiridates/Trdat killed [(7)]—someone who was accused of creating disturbances in Armenia, and of killing the king of the Heniochi and then of thrusting his sword in Verus' (1) face when the latter rebuked him for it—he merely had him exiled to Britain. [Cassius Dio 72. 14](#) [in English, at [LacusCurtius](#)].

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(1) The text concerns Martius Verus who, in 175 A.D., was the ruler of Cappadocia (Cass. Dio 72, 22. τῆς Καππαδοκίας ἀρχῶν), and in 176 became the ruler of Syria (*ibid.*, 29), in connection with Avidius Cassius' uprising against the emperor.

**Wikipedia:**

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Cass. Dio 72.14. καίτοι τά τε ἄλλα αἰ ποτε φιλανθρώπως καὶ τοῖς πολέμοις χρώμενος, καὶ Τιριδάτην σατράπην τὰ τε ἐν τῇ Ἀρμενίᾳ ταραξάντα καὶ τὸν τῶν Ἡνιόχων βασιλέα ἀποσφάζαντα, τῷ τε Οὐήρῳ ἐπιτιμῶντι οἱ περὶ τούτων τὸ ξίφος ἐπανατείναντες, μὴ κτείναντες ἀλλ' ἐς Βρεττανίαν πέμψας (Exc., V. 304).

(1)

**Aurelius Commodus Antoninus (180-January 1, 193)**

**Septimius Severus (193-February 4, 211)**

(Struggle for supremacy against: Pertinax (killed in April, 193); Didius Severus Julianus (died June 2, 193); Pescennius Niger (died 194).

**Caracalla, Severus' son (211-April 8, 217)**

**195 A.D.** After the civil war, Severus, "with an appetite for glory," ἐπιθυμία δοζης, directed his weapons against the barbarian Osroenians, the Adiabeniens, and the Arabs. The first two of these groups, who had rebelled and besieged Nisibis/Mtsbin, were defeated by Severus, and after the death of Severus's rival Niger, they sent an embassy to Severus—not to apologize for their sins—but to ask his favor, under the pretense that they had, in the present case, acted in his interest. Indeed, they said, they killed soldiers who were partisans of Niger, because of him. They also sent gifts to Severus promising to return the captives and the remains of the slain. Nevertheless, they did not want to leave the places they had occupied, nor to accept garrisons. They refused. They also demanded that all the soldiers left in their country withdraw. It was because of these circumstances that war was waged against them.

Severus crossed the Euphrates River and appeared in hostile territory. He went to Nisibis/Mtsbin and remained there. He sent against the barbarians Lateranus, Candidus, and Laetus, [attacking] from one side and then the other. Attacking the enemy, they ruined the territory and conquered the cities.

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(1) In Trajan's day, he was Ankialos Ἀγκίαλος'. Compare the name of the Persian king's envoy in Malalas. The kings of the Iazyges also had Iranian names Βανάδασπος, Ζαντικός (Cass. Dio).

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**196 A.D.** Severus, again dividing his army into three legions under the command of Laetus, Anullinus, and Probus, marched against Adiabene. They invaded here not without difficulty. Severus granted privileges to Nisibis/Mtsbin, whose management he entrusted to a "cavalry" noble from a great clan, boasting that he had added a large territory to the empire, and had made that city a defensive barrier for Syria.

However, events demonstrated in a convincing fashion that this conquest was a "source of constant wars and great expense to us. For it yields very little and uses up vast sums; and now that we have reached out to peoples who are neighbour of the Medes and the Parthians rather than of ourselves, we are always, one might say, fighting the battles of those peoples" (Cassius Dio, 75, 1-3; [Cassius Dio, 75, 1-3](#) [in English, at LacusCurtius]).

This war had scarcely ended when Severus entered the civil war against Caesar Albinus. The latter, after defeat, committed suicide.

Then, in 198, Severus turned his weapons against the Parthians. While he had been engaged in the civil war, the Parthians had with impunity become masters of Mesopotamia, and had also come very near seizing Nisibis, and would have succeeded, had not Laetus, who was besieged there, saved the place. Hearing the news of the emperor's arrival, the Parthians retreated to their country ("their leader was Vologases [(8)], whose brother was with Severus" (ἦρχε δὲ αὐτῶν Οὐολόγαισος, οὗ ἀδελφὸς συνῆν τῷ Σεουήρῳ):

Severus crossed the Euphrates River, capturing Seleucia and Babylon. Ctesiphon also was captured and [Severus] allowed his soldiers to plunder it, slaughtered a large number of inhabitants, and took captive about 100,000 people. Nevertheless, he did not pursue Vologases and did not hold Ctesiphon, "as if the only purpose of his campaign was to plunder that city."

ἄλλ' ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τοῦτο μόνον ἐστρατευκὼς ἴν' αὐτὴν διαρπάσῃ ᾤχετο (Cass. Dio, 76, 9):

[Cass. Dio, 76, 9](#) [in English, at [LacusCurtius](#)].

Severus attempted to capture Hatra, but was unsuccessful. Then he went to Palestine, and from there "he sailed to Upper Egypt, passing up the Nile," (καὶ ἐς τὴν Αἴγυπτον τὴν ἄνω διὰ τοῦ Νείλου ἀνέπλευσε) and capturing all of it with some few exceptions. For instance, he was unable to pass the frontier of Ethiopia because of a pestilence (Cassius Dio, 76, 13) [Cassius Dio, 76, 13](#) [in English, at [LacusCurtius](#)].

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### Marcus Aurelius Antoninus [Caracalla] (211-217)

Cassius Dio, 77, 12.

**213 A.D.** "Abgarus, king of the Osroeni, when he had once got control of the kindred tribes, visited upon their leaders all the worst forms of cruelty. Nominally he was compelling them to change to Roman customs, but in fact he was indulging his authority over them to the full" Cassius Dio 77, 12/[Cassius Dio, 78, 12](#) [in English, at [LacusCurtius](#)].

ὅτι Ἄγβαρος ὁ τῶν Ὀσροηνῶν βασιλεὺς ἐπειδὴ ἅπαξ ἐν κράτει τῶν ὁμοφύλων ἐγένετο, οὐδὲν ὁ τι δεινотάτων τοὺς προέχοντας αὐτῶν οὐκ ἐχειργάσατο. λόγῳ μὲν ἐς τὰ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἦθη μεθίστασθαι ἠνάγκασεν, ἔργῳ δὲ τῆς κατ' αὐτῶν ἐξουσίας ἀπλήστως ἐνεφορεῖτο.

"Antoninus tricked the king of the Osroeni, Abgarus, inducing him to visit him as a friend, and then arresting and imprisoning him; and so, Osroene being thus left without a king, he subdued it."

(ἡπατηκῶς γὰρ τὸν βασιλέα τῶν Ὀσροηνῶν Αὐγαρον ὥς δὴ παρὰ φίλον αὐτὸν ἦκειν, ἔπειτα συλλαβὼν ἔδρασε, καὶ τὴν Ὀσροηνὴν οὕτως ἀβασίλευτον οὖσαν λοιπὸν ἐχειρώσατο).

"When the king of the Armenians [(9)] was quarrelling with his own sons, Antoninus summoned him in a friendly letter, pretending that he would make peace between them; but he treated them as he had treated Abgarus. The Armenians, however, instead of yielding to him, had recourse to arms, and no one thereafter would trust him in anything whatever. Thus he learned by experience how great the penalty is for an emperor when he practises deceit upon friends."

τὸν δὲ τῶν Ἀρμενίων βασιλέα διαφερόμενον μετὰ τῶν ἰδίων παίδων ἐκάλεσε μὲν φιλικοῖς γράμμασιν ὥς δὴ εἰρηνεύσων αὐτούς, ἔδρασε δὲ καὶ περὶ τούτους ἅ καὶ περὶ τὸν Αὐγαρον. οὐ μὴν καὶ οἱ Ἀρμένιοι προσεχώρησαν αὐτῷ ἄλλ' ἐς ὅπλα ἐχώρησαν καὶ οὐκετ' οὐδεὶς αὐτῷ τὸ παράπαν οὐδὲν ἐπίστευσεν, ὥστε καὶ ἔργῳ αὐτὸν ἐκμαθεῖν ὅσον αὐτοκράτορι ζημίωμά ἐστι τό τι ἀπατηλὸν πρὸς φίλους πράξαι (Cass. Dio, 77, 12).

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"He likewise took the greatest credit to himself because, after the death of Vologaesús, king of the Parthians [(10)], the king's sons (1) began to fight for the throne, thus pretending that a situation which was due to chance had been brought about through his own contriving. So keen, it seems, was the delight he always took in the fact and in the dissensions of the brothers and in the mutual slaughter of persons in no way connected with himself.

But he did not hesitate to write to the senate regarding the Parthian rulers, who were brothers and at variance, that the brothers' quarrel would work great harm to the Parthian State, as if this sort of thing could destroy the barbarians and yet had saved Rome, — whereas in fact Rome had been, one might say, utterly overthrown thereby!" Cassius Dio 77,12/[[Cassius Dio, 78, 12](#), in English at LacusCurtius]

## Preparation for War against the Armenians and Parthians

**212 A.D.** "He was so enthusiastic about Alexander that he used certain weapons and cups which he believed had once been his, and he also set up many likenesses of him both in the camps and in Rome itself. He organized a phalanx, composed entirely of Macedonians, sixteen thousand strong, named it "Alexander's phalanx," and equipped it with the arms that warriors had used in his day; these consisted of a helmet of raw ox-hide, a three-ply linen breastplate, a bronze shield, long pike, short spear, high boots, and sword." [Cassius Dio 77,7/[[Cassius Dio, 78, 7](#), in English at LacusCurtius].

**214-215 A.D.** "Such was his behaviour while in winter-quarters at Nicomedeia. He also drilled the Macedonian phalanx, and built two very large engines for the Armenian and Parthian wars, so constructed that he could take them apart and carry them in ships to Syria." [Cassius Dio 77, 18/[[Cassius Dio, 78, 18](#), in English at LacusCurtius].

**215 A.D.** "When he made an expedition against the Parthians, his pretext for war was that Vologaesús had not granted his request for the surrender of Tiridates [(11)] and a certain Antiochus along with him." [Cassius Dio 77, 19/[[Cassius Dio, 78, 19](#), in English at LacusCurtius].

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(1) Vagharsh and Artavan, 213-227.

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"Antiochus was a Cilician who at first had pretended to be a philosopher of the Cynic school, and in this way had proved of the greatest help to the soldiers in the war; for when they were dispirited by reason of the excessive cold, he would encourage them by throwing himself into the snow and rolling in it. Hence he had obtained both money and honours from Severus himself as well as Antoninus, but becoming conceited at this, he had attached himself to Tiridates (1) and deserted with him to the Parthian king" [Cassius Dio 77, 19/[[Cassius Dio 78, 19](#), in English at Lacus Curtius]. See also Joannis Xiphilini Epitoma, 335. Suidae lexicon: Ἀντίοχος ὁ αὐτόμολος

"When the Parthian king became frightened and surrendered both Tiridates and Antiochus, Antoninus immediately disbanded the expedition. But he sent Theocritus with an army against the Armenians, only to suffer a severe reverse when that general was defeated by them" [Cassius Dio 77, 21/[[Cassius Dio 78, 21](#), in English at Lacus Curtius].

"Theocritus was the son of a slave, and had been brought up in the theatre, but he advanced to such power under Antoninus that both the prefects were as nothing compared to him. Then there was Epagathus, his equal in power and lawlessness, who was likewise an imperial freedman. As for Theocritus (2), he kept travelling to and fro for the purpose of securing provisions and then hawking them at retail, and he put many people to death in connexion with this business as well as for other reasons" *ibid*.

## 216 A.D.

"After this Antoninus made a campaign against the Parthians, on the pretext that Artabanus had refused to give him his daughter in marriage when he sued for her hand; for the Parthian king had realized clearly enough that the emperor, while pretending to want to marry her, was in reality eager to get the Parthian kingdom incidentally for himself. [532] So Antoninus now ravaged a large section of the country around Media by making a sudden incursion, sacked many fortresses, won over Arbela, dug open the royal tombs of the Parthians, and scattered the bones about. This was the easier for him to accomplish inasmuch as the Parthians did not even join battle with him" [[Cassius Dio, 79, 1](#), in English at LacusCurtius].

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(1) According to Justi [F. Justi, *Iranische Namenbuch*] this Trdat/Tiridates was the uncle (father's brother) of Vagharsh/Vologases V and Artavan/Artabanus V, and thus a Parthian prince. However, that is incorrect. Tiridates...[the sentence is unfinished, translator].

(2) Theocritus also was a caesar, Καισάρειος.

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According to Herodianus (IV, 9 and 10), the Parthian king at first rejected Antoninus' demand, but then, seduced by the emperor's gifts and songs, allowed him into his realm. The latter took advantage of this to attack by surprise and to lay waste the country (Aelii Spartiani Vita Hadriani, 6. *per Cadusios fines et Babylonios ingressus* ["Crossing the borders of the Cadusians (1) and the Babylonians, he attacked"]). [Herodian, Book 4. chapters 9 and 10](#) [in English, at Tertullian].

The barbarians pulled back to the mountains on the other side of the Tigris River to prepare for defense. The emperor concealed [the motive for] that withdrawal, boasting that he had so completely crushed them that they could not even be seen (as he wrote).

**217 A.D.** The Parthians and Medes assembled such a military force that the emperor was terrified. He was brave and ready when it came to issuing threats, but a coward when it came to fighting.

**217 A.D., April 8**, Going from Edessa to Harran, Caracalla was killed by his own troops.

Macrinus, the new Roman emperor was of African [Berber] origin, the son of undistinguished people from Caesarea [in Mauretania]. He had one ear pierced, like a Mauretanian, but his moderation outweighed his lowly origins.

**217 A.D.** Macrinus, seeing that Artabanus/Ardavan was extremely angry at what had happened and was greatly incensed and had invaded Mesopotamia with a large army, first returned to him the captives with friendly words, calling for peace and he blamed Caracalla as the cause of what happened. However, Artabanus, not wanting to accept these proposals at all, immediately ordered him to restore the destroyed castles and cities, completely leave Mesopotamia, and pay for the other damages caused, as well as for the destruction of the tombs of the kings, despising Macrinus as an unworthy newcomer and being extremely angry with him. Macrinus, who did not even have time to think, moved towards his opponent, who had already reached Nisibis, where he was defeated in one of the battles.

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(1) This may be a confusion with the Carduchi.

## Wikipedia:

[Macrinus](#)

[Artabanus IV](#) of Parthia (213-224). He was the last Arsacid ruler of Iran.

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**218 A.D.** "For Macrinus, both because of his natural cowardice... and because of the soldiers' lack of discipline, did not dare to fight the war out, but instead expended enormous sums in the form of gifts as well as money, which he presented both to Artabanus himself and to the powerful men around him, the entire outlay amounting to two hundred million sesterces [15 million drachmas (1)]. And the Parthian was not loath to come to terms, both for this reason and because his troops were exceedingly restive, due to their having been kept away from home an unusually long time as well as to the scarcity of food; for they had no food supplies available, either from stores previously made ready, or from the country itself, inasmuch as the food either had been destroyed or else was in the forts. Macrinus, however, did not forward a full account of all their arrangements to the senate, and consequently sacrifices of victory were voted in his honour and the name of Parthicus was bestowed upon him. But this he declined, being ashamed, apparently, to take a title from an enemy by whom he had been defeated" [Cassius Dio, 78, 27/[Cassius Dio, 79, 27](#), in English at [LacusCurtius](#)].

"Moreover, the warfare carried on against the Armenian king, to which I have referred, now came to an end, after Tiridates had accepted the crown sent him by Macrinus and received back his mother (whom Tarautas had imprisoned for eleven months) together with the booty captured in Armenia, and also entertained hopes of obtaining all the territory that his father had possessed in Cappadocia [(12)] as well as the annual payment that had been made by the Romans" *ibid* [(13)].

*218 p.: καὶ μέντοι καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὸν Ἀρμένιον πολεμωθέντα, ὥσπερ εἶπον, κατέστη, τοῦ [τε] Τιριδάτου πεμφθὲν αὐτῷ τὸ διάδημα παρὰ τοῦ Μακρίνου λαβόντος, καὶ τὴν μητέρα, ἣν ἑνδεκα μηνσὶν ὁ Ταραύτας ἐν τῷ δεσποτηρίῳ κατεσχέκει, τὴν τε λείαν τὴν ἐκ τῆς Ἀρμενίας ἀλούσαν κομισαμένου, καὶ τὰ χωρία ὅσα ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ Καππαδοκίᾳ ἐκέκτητο, τό τε [γάρ] ἀργύριον δὲ κατ' ἔτος παρὰ τῶν Ῥωμαίων εὐρίσκετο, ἐλπίσαντος λήψεσθαι (Cass. Dio, 78, 27).*

(Caracalla had demanded Tiridates/Trdat from Vologases/Vagharsh. But the Armenians did not lay down their arms. Tiridates managed to free himself from captivity and at that time he ruled in Armenia).

"Macrinus, after being thus defeated on the eighth day of June, sent his son in charge of Epagathus and some other attendants to Artabanus, king of the Parthians" [Cassius Dio, 78, 39/[Cassius Dio 79, 39](#), in English at [LacusCurtius](#)].

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(1) 50 million dinars, see T. Mommsen, vol. V, 10th book, p. 264.

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"Many uprisings were begun by many persons, some of which caused great alarm, but they were all put down.

But the situation in Mesopotamia became still more alarming and inspired a more genuine fear in all, not merely the people in Rome, but the rest of mankind as well. For Artaxerxes, a Persian, after conquering the Parthians in three battles and killing their king, Artabanus, made a campaign against Hatra, in the endeavour to capture it as a base for attacking the Romans. He actually did make a breach in the wall, but when he lost a good many soldiers through an ambushade, he moved against Media. Of this country, as also of Parthia, he acquired no small portion, partly by force and partly by intimidation, and then marched against Armenia. Here he suffered a reverse at the hands of the natives, some Medes, and the sons of Artabanus, and either fled, as some say, or, as others assert, retired to prepare a larger expedition" [[Cassius Dio, 80](#), in English at [LacusCurtius](#)].

227 p. Ἀρταξέρξης γὰρ τις Πέρσης τοὺς τε Πάρθους τρισὶ μάχαις νικήσας, καὶ τὸν βασιλέα αὐτῶν Ἀρτάβανον ἀποκτείνας, ἐπὶ τὰ Ἄτρα ἐπεστράτευσεν, ἐπιβασίαν ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τοὺς Ῥωμαίους ποιοῦμενος. καὶ τὸ μὲν τεῖχος διέρρηξεν, συχνοὺς δὲ δὴ τῶν στρατιωτῶν ἐξ ἐνέδρας ἀποβαλὼν ἐπὶ τὴν Μηδίαν μετέστη, καὶ ἐκείνης τε οὐκ ὀλίγα καὶ τῆς Παρθίας, τὰ μὲν βίβη τὰ δὲ καὶ φόβῳ, παραλαβὼν ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀρμενίαν ἤλασε, κἀνταῦθα πρὸς τε τῶν ἐπιχωρίων καὶ πρὸς Μήδων τινῶν τῶν τε τοῦ Ἀρταβάνου παίδων παίσας, ὥς μὲν τινες λέγουσιν, ἔφυγεν, ὥς δ' ἕτεροι, ἀνεχώρησε πρὸς παρασκευὴν δυνάμεως μεζονος (Cass. Dio, 80).

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[614]

### Notes by S. S. Xach'atryan

Xach'atryan's notes are at the end of the volume, on pp. 614-615.

#### [Notes for page 523]

[(1)] The text refers to the temple of the goddess of war Enyo/Bellona (consort of Ares).

[(2)] Parthian king Vologases/Vologaesus III (A.D. 148-191).

[(3)] The site of Armenian Elegeia, near Karin/Erzurum, is modern Ilıca.

#### [524]

[(4)] Sohaemus was a prince of the city of Emesa in Syria and belonged to a branch of the Orontid/Ervanduni dynasty. He reigned in Armenia under the name of Tigranes (A.D. 140-161 and 164-185).

#### [525]

[(5)] The reference is to Vagharshapat, which was declared the capital of Armenia in place of Artaxata/Artashat.

#### [526]

[(6)] The king of Armenia, Bakur I Arshakuni (161-163). After being dethroned, he moved to Rome where he took the imperial name "Aurelius."

[(7)] In the view of scholars, this satrap (*naxarar*) Tiridates is [reflected in] the Trdat Bagratuni mentioned by Movses Xorenats'i (Book 2, chapter 63).

#### [528]

[(8)] The reference is to the Parthian king Vologases/Vagharsh IV (191-216 A.D.).

#### [529]

[(9)] The reference is to the Armenian king Xosrov I (198-216) A.D.).

[(10)] In this passage, the reference is to Vologases V (208-215 A.D.).

#### [530]

[(11)] Probably the reference is to Armenian king Xosrov I's son, Trdat II (217-252 A.D.).

#### [533]

[(12)] The reference certainly is to property belonging to the Armenian Arsacids/Arshakunis located in Cappadocia.

[(13)] The text is referring to the annual sum paid by the Romans to the Armenian king to defend the passes of the Caucasus [from invasion] (see J. Marquart, *Eransahr nach der Geographie des Ps.-Moses Xorenac'i*, Berlin, 1901, p. 95).

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[(14)] The events occurred in 224-226, when Ardashir the Sasanian overthrew the last Arsacid king Ardabanus/Artavan V in Persia/Iran, and founded the Sasanian dynasty.